

BOROUGH OF PENRYN



# REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR

1 9 5 2







BOROUGH OF PENRYN.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors  
of the Borough of Penryn.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my report on the health of the  
Borough of Penryn during 1952.

The health of the Borough during the year was satisfactory. The birth rate at 19.5 per thousand of population was much higher than that for the whole country and the death rate was appreciably lower. The infant mortality rate at 24.7 per thousand live births maintained the high standard of recent years. There was no epidemic of any sort and there is nothing in the analysis of causes of death which calls for comment.

Far from satisfactory, however, is the fact that one out of every three children in Penryn is unprotected against diphtheria. It is to be hoped that parents will carry out their duty to their children without the stimulus of an epidemic of this dreadful disease. Lazy and indifferent parents are apt nowadays to excuse their dilatoriness on the ground that there is some danger of poliomyelitis following immunisation. When poliomyelitis is epidemic in a district the odds against immunisation being followed by poliomyelitis are about 1 in 2,000 and to guard against this faint risk all immunisations are stopped at such times. When there is no epidemic there is no danger of poliomyelitis.

Early in the year advantage was taken of the visit of the Mass Radiography Unit to attempt a comprehensive X-ray survey of the population. Unfortunately we failed to get the co-operation of the adult population but sufficient evidence was obtained to show that despite a high proportion of old cases of tuberculosis in the town the number of early cases is well below average. The policy of the Council for many years past has been to rehouse as soon as possible all known cases of the disease who were badly housed. That this policy was right is now proved by the results of the survey.

I should like here to express my appreciation of the help and consideration I have always received from the Chairman and members of the Health Committee and my thanks to Mr. Blackmore for his ready co-operation at all times.

I am,

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Your obedient servant,

V. E. WHITMAN,

Medical Officer of Health



GENERAL STATISTICS

|                                                         |         |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Area, acres                                             | .. .. . | 721          |
| Population                                              | .. .. . | 4,147        |
| Number of inhabited houses                              | .. .. . | 1,286        |
| Rateable Value                                          | .. .. . | £20,797. 10. |
| Product of penny rate                                   | .. .. . | £80.         |
| Number of houses built or under construction since 1945 | .. ..   | 208          |
| Number of families on waiting list for houses           | .. .. . | 323          |

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births

|                                                   |            |       |      |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|-------|------|
| Males 45                                          | Females 36 | Total | 81   |
| Registrar General's "Area Comparability Factor"   |            |       | 1.0  |
| Birth rate, per 1,000 population, Penryn          |            |       | 19.5 |
| Birth rate, per 1,000 population, England & Wales |            |       | 15.3 |

Still Births

|                                                         |           |       |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|
| Males 1                                                 | Females 2 | Total | 3    |
| Still birth rate, per 1,000 all birth, Penryn           |           |       | 35.7 |
| Still birth rate, per 1,000 all births, England & Wales |           |       | 22.6 |

Deaths

|                                                  |            |       |      |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|-------|------|
| Males 21                                         | Females 21 | Total | 42   |
| Registrar General's "Area Comparability Factor"  |            |       | 0.96 |
| Death rate, per 1,000 population, Penryn         |            |       | 10.1 |
| Death rate, per 1,000 population England & Wales |            |       | 11.3 |

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age.

|                                                                |           |       |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|
| Males 1                                                        | Females 1 | Total | 2    |
| Infant mortality rate, per 1,000 live births - Penryn          |           |       | 24.7 |
| Infant mortality rate, per 1,000 live births - England & Wales |           |       | 27.6 |

ANALYSIS OF CAUSES OF DEATH

|                                         | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tuberculosis, respiratory               | 1           | 1           |
| Tuberculosis, other                     | -           | -           |
| Syphilitic disease                      | -           | -           |
| Diphtheria                              | -           | -           |
| Whooping cough                          | -           | -           |
| Meningococcal infections                | -           | -           |
| Acute poliomyelitis                     | 1           | -           |
| Measles                                 | -           | -           |
| Other infections and parasitic diseases | -           | 1           |
| Malignant neoplasm, stomach             | -           | 4           |
| Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus      | 1           | 1           |
| Malignant neoplasm, breast              | -           | 1           |
| Malignant neoplasm, uterus              | -           | 1           |
| Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasm  | 5           | 1           |
| Leukaemia, aleukaemia                   | -           | -           |
| Diabetes                                | -           | -           |
| Vascular lesions of nervous system      | 11          | 8           |
| Coronary disease                        | 4           | 4           |
| Hypertension with heart disease         | -           | -           |
| Other heart disease                     | 9           | 10          |
| Other circulatory disease               | 4           | -           |
| Influenza                               | -           | -           |
| Pneumonia                               | 1           | -           |
| Bronchitis                              | 2           | 1           |
| Other diseases pf respiratory system    | 1           | -           |
| Ulcer of stomach and duodenum           | 2           | -           |



Analysis of Causes of Death (cont.)

|                                        | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea     | -           | 1           |
| Nephritis and nephrosis                | 1           | 1           |
| Hyperplasia of prostate                | -           | -           |
| Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion        | -           | -           |
| Congenital malformations               | -           | 1           |
| Other defined and ill-defined diseases | 3           | 5           |
| Motor vehicle accidents                | 1           | 5           |
| All other accidents                    | 1           | -           |
| Suicide                                | -           | 1           |
| Homicide and operations of war         | -           | -           |
|                                        | <u>48</u>   | <u>42</u>   |
|                                        | =====       | =====       |

DEATHS IN AGE GROUPS.

|                  | <u>M</u>  | <u>F</u>  | <u>Total</u> |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| 0+ .. .. .       | 1         | 1         | 2            |
| 1 - 4 . . . . .  | -         | -         | -            |
| 5 - 14 .. . . .  | -         | -         | -            |
| 15 - 24 .. . . . | -         | 1         | 1            |
| 25 - 44 .. . . . | -         | 2         | 2            |
| 45 - 64 .. . . . | 5         | 5         | 10           |
| 65 - 74 .. . . . | 8         | 4         | 12           |
| 75+ .. . . .     | 7         | 8         | 15           |
|                  | <u>21</u> | <u>21</u> | <u>42</u>    |
|                  | =====     | =====     | =====        |

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE HEALTH SERVICE

1. Clinics.

Infant Welfare Clinic. 53 sessions were held at which there were 1,580 attendances. The average attendance was thus about 30 per session.

Dental Clinic.

|                            | <u>Expectant &amp; .</u><br><u>Nursing Mothers</u> | <u>Pre-school</u><br><u>children</u> | <u>School</u><br><u>children.</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Number inspected           | 8                                                  | 22                                   | 729                               |
| Number requiring treatment | 7                                                  | 20                                   | 631                               |
| Number treated             | 4                                                  | 16                                   | 369                               |
| Number of attendances      | 30                                                 | 53                                   | 525                               |
| Number made dentally fit   | 4                                                  | 11                                   | 318                               |

2. Ambulance Service and Hospital Car Service.

These services are supplied by Falmouth.

3. Home Help Service.

During the year 19 maternity and 98 other cases were given help in their own homes.

4. After Care.

Free extra nourishment was granted to 6 tubercular persons on the recommendation of the Chest Physician.

5. Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting.

Miss Margaret Gray, Assistant County Nursing Officer, reports -



"The cooperation between the local practitioners and our staff is good and this greatly benefits all our cases. The Nurse midwife has the gas and air certificate and all patients passed as fit subjects by their doctors have the opportunity of this relief.

Now that the peak number of children born at the end of the war are in school the staff are able to give more time to visiting the aged in their homes. It is important both on the grounds of humanity and economics to keep these people in their own homes as long as possible. A little help from time to time can stave off senile deterioration which all too often ends in mental breakdown. It is suggested that this presents a fruitful field for voluntary activities. The British Red Cross and W.V.S. Societies are very helpful in this work but there is plenty of room for other workers both organised and individually.

The Health Visitors have also had to devote a lot of time to the task of dealing with verminous children in the schools. Investigation has shown that most of the persistently verminous children get their infections and re-infections at home from their mothers, aunts and older sisters. Now that safe and certain insecticidal lotions are easily obtainable, free if necessary, this sort of thing is inexcusable.

The Health Visitors helped by the Falmouth staff did a fine job of canvassing prior to the visit of the Mass Radiography Unit early in the year. In the bleakest possible weather every house was visited at least once in an effort to get all adults to avail themselves of the opportunity offered. The response was not good but I refuse to believe that the work done on that occasion was without educational value."

|                                 |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| General cases                   | 129   |
| Nursing visits                  | 1,616 |
| Midwifery cases                 | 67    |
| Midwifery visits                | 1,241 |
| Ante natal visits               | 315   |
| Home visits to children under 5 | 2,731 |
| Home visits to old persons      | 293   |

#### 6. Problem Families.

In 1950 in a joint circular that the Home Office and the Ministries of Health and Education gave consideration to "what more might be done to prevent the neglect or ill-treatment of children in their own homes".

As a result of the circular committees were set up in each Health Area in Cornwall. In this Area it consisted of local representatives of the Children's Department, the N.S.P.C.C., the Social and Moral Welfare Association, the Education Department, the British Red Cross Society, the National Assistance Board, the Falmouth and Truro Councils of Churches, the Assistant School Medical Officer and myself.

Five meetings were held in 1952 but it was soon apparent that though between us we were aware of many problems the committee had power only to discuss and discussion led nowhere. We were all agreed that actual cases of wilful neglect and/or persistent cruelty were uncommon but that there was a number of borderline cases for whom something could be done if we had power to rehouse and help financially. In other cases courses of rehabilitation would almost certainly help but here again we were powerless. Not unnaturally the discovery of our ineffectiveness led to an evaporation of enthusiasm and attendance at the meetings fell away.

The problems remain however and efforts to help the families concerned give my staff a great deal of work. The voluntary organisations named are always willing to cooperate and we never hesitate to call upon them. Though our gains are little better than microscopic I feel quite certain that under existing circumstances the committee could have done no more.



PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

| <u>Age<br/>Group</u> | <u>Scarlet Fever</u> |          | <u>Whooping Cough</u> |          | <u>Measles</u> |          |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
|                      | <u>M</u>             | <u>F</u> | <u>M</u>              | <u>F</u> | <u>M</u>       | <u>F</u> |
| 0+                   | -                    | -        | 1                     | -        | -              | -        |
| 1 - 2                | -                    | -        | 2                     | 1        | 1              | -        |
| 3 - 4                | -                    | 2        | -                     | 1        | -              | -        |
| 5 - 9                | -                    | 1        | 1                     | -        | -              | -        |
| 10 - 14              | -                    | -        | -                     | -        | -              | -        |
| 15 - 24              | -                    | -        | -                     | -        | -              | -        |
| 25+                  | -                    | -        | -                     | -        | -              | -        |
|                      | -                    | 3        | 4                     | 2        | 1              | -        |
| Total                | 3                    |          | 6                     |          | 1              |          |

Immunisation against Diphtheria

During the year 45 (78) children under 5 were immunised against Diphtheria, 167 (138) booster doses were **also given**. The figures for last year are shown in brackets.

On the 31st December, the estimated number of children between the ages of 1 year and 5 years in Penryn was 326, of these 217 or 66.9, had been immunised.

Vaccination against Smallpox.

|                      | <u>Under 1</u> | <u>1 - 4</u> | <u>5 - 14</u> | <u>15+</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Number vaccinated    | 6              | 4            | -             | 8          | 18           |
| Number re-vaccinated | -              | -            | -             | 5          | 5            |

TUBERCULOSIS.

Pulmonary

| <u>Age<br/>Group</u> | <u>New Cases</u> |          | <u>Deaths</u> |          |
|----------------------|------------------|----------|---------------|----------|
|                      | <u>M</u>         | <u>F</u> | <u>M</u>      | <u>F</u> |
| Under 15             | -                | -        | -             | -        |
| 15 - 44              | 1                | 2        | -             | -        |
| 45 - 64              | -                | -        | -             | 1        |
| 65 & over            | -                | -        | -             | -        |
|                      | 1                | 2        | -             | 1        |
| Totals               | 3                |          | 1             |          |

There were no new cases of or deaths from non-respiratory tuberculosis.

On the 31st December, there were 34 respiratory and 11 non -respiratory cases on the register.

|                                     |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Rate per 1,000 population, Penryn   | 10.8 |
| Rate per 1,000 population, Cornwall | 6.2  |

Up to 31st December 22 children, all of them contacts with cases of tuberculosis, had received B.C.G. vaccination.

MASS RADIOGRAPHY

The Mass Radiography Unit was stationed in Penryn from 14th February to 12th March, 1952. The aim was to x-ray everyone in the Borough over the age of 13 years. To this end there was a great deal of



preliminary propoganda viz.

1. The County Medical Officer wrote to the General Medical Practitioners.
2. A letter was sent by the Director of the Mass Radiography Unit to every householder.
3. Three Health Visitors made a canvass of every household.
4. Meetings of local organisations were addressed by me.
5. A special meeting and film show was held at which the **speakers** included the Deputy County Medical Officer and the Director of the Mass Radiography Unit.
6. All local firms were circularised and visited by the Secretary of the Unit.
7. Press publicity.
8. An announcement in the B.B.C. local news bulletin.

Unfortunately the majority of the population resisted all our efforts. Of 3,171 adults canvassed 1,650 asked for and were given appointments, only about 1,200 attended. The number attending other than as a direct result of the canvass was negligible. The school children over 13 years were examined as part of the routine school medical examination. The local firms cooperated well but the numbers employed were small.

Dr. Sheers, Director of the Mass Radiography Unit, concluded his report on the survey as follows:-

"The low response was a disappointment, especially in view of the hard work and very thorough canvass carried out by the three Health Visitors. The level of 40% appears to be fairly easily achieved, as was shown by the amateur efforts at St. Just. A more effective follow-up of the failure to attend might have raised the figure to 50%, but the fact remains that half of the adult population remained unresponsive to all persuasion. Comparison with other surveys similarly organised, will show whether this is due to characteristics of the local temperament.

#### Efficiency of Survey.

##### Rate of working:

A total of 2,522 examinations were carried out during the four weeks at Penryn, an average of 630 per week. This is about three-quarters of the usual rate and would not seriously affect the year's figures. It should be noted that 2/5 of the examinees came from outside the area under investigation, and that without this influx the Unit would have wasted a good deal of time.

##### Rate of case finding:

Among the inhabitants of Penryn 7 clinically significant cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were found in 4 weeks work. One case of malignant disease was also found."



## BOROUGH OF PENRYN

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report for the year ending  
31st December, 1952

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Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

### Water Supply

The town is supplied by the Falmouth Waterworks Department and the supply afforded has been adequate during the year.

There are, however, still a number of properties on the perimeter of the Borough which rely upon comparatively shallow wells for water for domestic use but at present there is no alternate source of supply to be obtained.

Of the six properties in Tremough Dale only one has a piped water supply and the extension of the main to this area would remedy this situation at an economic expense.

### Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

In previous reports I have commented on the sewage outfalls into the river but during this year the Council has made an application to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for consent to borrow £33,563 for the proposed new sewerage pumping station and mains required to discharge the sewage from the Borough into the sewers of the Falmouth Borough for disposal at the proposed new sea outfall at Penance Point.

For some time there have been complaints regarding the storm overflow sewer from North Parade fouling the beach at Turnpike Creek and I am glad to be able to report that the Borough of Falmouth have extended this storm overflow in a northerly direction to discharge the storm overflow below low tide level.

No major complaints arose due to defects in the sewerage system in the Borough but the provision of two manholes were found necessary at points where blockages had occurred and these manholes have been constructed and no further complaint has arisen.

### Refuse Collection and Disposal

The twice weekly collection of refuse has been maintained during the year with the exception of the houses on the perimeter of the town where refuse is collected once a week. Refuse is collected every day of the week except Tuesday and Thursday but as the new housing schemes develop further time will be required for the collection.

I have reported from time to time on the general state of the dustbins throughout the town and to those of some of the Council houses in particular but in November the Council made a definite decision to supply all of its houses with dustbins and this in turn should enable some progress to be made with individual Land Lords whose dustbins are far from satisfactory.

### Disposal Land at Bissom

The Bissom site which was prepared i.e construction of access road, provision of fencing and a length of 21" diameter concrete culvert for the stream at a total cost of £543. 4. 11 came into operation on the 11th February. One man has been employed on the refuse collection days for the disposal and covering of the refuse. The provision of soil for the covering of the refuse has been a problem during the year as the original site was so wet that machines could not be used to excavate the original top soil. Soil has therefore been carted from the various housing sites when required.



## Public Conveniences

During the year alterations were made to a store room at the Town Quay to provide two W.C's for Ladies. There are now conveniences for each sex at Lower Market Street, The Town Quay, Trelawney Park and Glasney Playing Field.

The flushing apparatus has been renewed at the Lower Market Street convenience and this has reduced the number of complaints received and effected a considerable saving in water.

A scheme for the erection of a convenience at the western end of the Town has been considered but the site proposed was open to objection and further sites are being investigated.

## Slaughter-houses

Central slaughtering continues under the Ministry of Food and accordingly the slaughter-houses in the Borough have not been used during the year.

The central slaughter-house at Penvose which lies just outside the North West boundary of the Borough, still discharges effluent which can find its way into the head of one of the streams which flow through the town. If this slaughter-house is to continue in use it is considered that the risk of pollution, acceptable perhaps during wartime, should be removed by the construction of an up to date disposal plant.

## Meat and Other Foods

No carcase meat has been condemned during the year but  $15\frac{1}{2}$  stone of wet fish arrived unfit for human consumption due to delays in transport.

Canned foods condemned, with continental hams and meat in the majority, are as follow<sup>r</sup> :-

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Fish           | $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs   |
| Meat           | $25\frac{3}{4}$ lbs |
| Peas           | $15\frac{1}{2}$ lbs |
| Beans          | 2 lbs               |
| Soups          | $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs   |
| Cooked Ham     | $65\frac{1}{4}$ lbs |
| <b>Fruit</b>   | $16\frac{3}{4}$ lbs |
| <b>Pickles</b> | 1 Jar               |

Cheese (processed & boxed) 20 lbs

## Milk Distribution

Milk distributed in the Borough is supplied in bottles by six distributors with on exception where milk is supplied from one of the local farms.

Informal action taken in respect of fouled bottles, a dirty person and an unclean vehicle resulted in satisfactory improvements in each case.

## Housing

An effort has been made this year to commence action against the worst of the sub-standard houses in the Borough.



25 houses were the subject of four special reports to the Council. Demolition Orders were made in respect of 5 houses. Undertaking not to relet the houses for habitation after the present tenants have been rehoused were accepted in respect of 4 houses. Consideration of the 8 remaining houses was deferred in order to give the owners additional time to consider their proposals.

There are many houses in good structural condition which by alterations and small addition could be improved to provide a good standard of accommodation and it is a matter of disappointment that no owner in the Borough has yet taken advantage of the opportunities offered in the Housing Act of 1949. I understand that the chief difficulty lies in finding the alternate accommodation for the tenants whilst the alterations are being carried out.

In my opinion there can be very little real improvement, beyond the ordinary maintenance repairs, to the majority of the sub-standard houses in the area whilst the tenants are in occupation and until the Local Authority sets aside a number of new houses for such rehousing little can be done. The Council's problem of satisfying the needs of those applicants already on the waiting list is fully appreciated but an allocation as suggested above would have the threefold result of rehousing a family, providing a better standard house and reducing the number of new housing units required.

It has been noticed that there is a reluctance on the part of a number of owners of property to carry out the ordinary maintenance repairs to their property and these small defects are having an accumulative effect and will require some major repairs to rectify the defects. So often the replacement or renewal of a few slates will prevent damage to quite a large area of plaster in ceilings and walls, the repair of a defective rain water gutter or downpipe prevents considerable dampness and plaster defects in walls and two coats of paint on external woodwork at regular intervals would prevent the necessity for renewing whole windows and doors and considerably assist in preventing dampness penetrating to the inside of the house. The high cost of repairs and the financial difficulties created by the Rent Restrictions Acts are well known but this should not deter property owners from adopting the "stitch in time" policy in respect of their property.

Set out below are details of new houses erected and repairs carried out to existing property.

|                                                        |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| New houses erected by the Council                      | 8   |
| New houses erected by Private Enterprise               | 13  |
| War Damaged houses repaired                            | -   |
| Other houses repaired as the result of informal action | 9   |
| Repairs to Council houses                              | 241 |

|                                                                                                              |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| No. of inspections made regarding the disrepair or defective conditions of houses (excluding Council houses) | 104 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|

|                                                 |     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| No. of inspections, as above, of Council houses | 249 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|

|                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Total No. of houses in the Borough | 1,286 |
|------------------------------------|-------|

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| No. of Council Houses. | 334 |
|------------------------|-----|



## Rodent Control

The regular systematic inspection of premises has been made during the year and where infestation has been found it has been dealt with. Complaints received of infestation have been subject to special and extra inspections.

The regular test baiting of the sewers in the town have been carried out and of the 16 manholes baited rats were only observed in 3. These manholes will continue to receive treatment until no further 'takes' are recorded.

The infestation of business premises in the town continues to decrease in number and in volume due largely to the "proofing" work carried out by the various occupiers upon the informal representations and advice given by the department.

14 of the 20 Agricultural premises have been inspected during the year and no complaint has been received or infestation found in either.

The Falmouth Road Refuse Dump still requires treatment and it was found necessary to carry out four separate sets of treatment on this site during the year.

The Bissom Refuse Disposal land is regularly inspected and four treatments were found necessary during the year.

No major infestations have been found during the year and no areas of infestation have been discovered which require 'block' control.

Generally speaking infestations are still found at or near the sites where poultry is kept and it is considered that more detailed attention to the feeding of poultry by the owners would substantially reduce the rat population in these areas.

It is significant to note that the only complaint received regarding mice infestation was in regard to a ~~smell~~ which was thought to be attributed to a dead mouse which on investigation ~~proved~~ to be otherwise.

The Public have co-operated in the work of Rodent Control during the year and no Statutory Action was found necessary.

The Rodent Operator was absent through sickness for two weeks during the year.

I append below a summary of the work carried out during the year.

|                                                 |      |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|
| No. of inspections and re-inspections made were | 1216 |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|

### Premises Treated

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Dwellings and gardens  | 114 |
| Refuse Tips            | 8   |
| Business Premises      | 8   |
| Corporation Properties | 6   |



### Salvage

Although the value of waste paper fell during the year from £15. 15. 0 to £ 6. 10. 0 per ton the collection of salvage was continued and resulted in the disposal of 32 tons of waste paper to the value of £321.

Apart from the small profit made by this operation the removal of this quantity of paper from the refuse resulted in a saving in refuse disposal space.

I am, Ladies & Gentlemen  
Your obedient servant

K.R. BLACKMORE., M.R.S.I.,  
Sanitary Inspector.

